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SUBJECT: CZECH COMMENTS ON UPCOMING JULY GAERC

REF: PRAGUE 418

1. (SBU) Summary: On July 23 emboff spoke with Katerina Sequensova of the Czech MFA Department of Common Foreign and Security Policy in advance of the July 27-28 EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC). She offered comments on the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia, and on Iran, Somalia, Moldova and the Czech-Canadian visa issue. End Summary.

Czechs Would Welcome US Involvement in Georgia EUMM

2. (SBU) Sequensova stated that the EU member states have agreed to extend the mandate of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) for one year (through September 14, 2009). As noted in Ref A, the Czechs would strongly encourage and support U.S. participation in this mission, particularly in light of the departure of OSCE and UN observer missions. In their opinion, USG involvement, particularly on the ground, would send a strong message to the rest of the world of European and U.S. solidarity. Sequensova also noted that equipment, such as vehicles could be very useful. (Note: The Czechs currently have 9 Czechs participating in this 200 person EUMM. End Note.)

Broad Discussion of Iran and Somalia

3. (SBU) The EU Foreign Ministers are scheduled to discuss Iran during the GAERC luncheon. The key elements to be covered are the detentions of European and Iranian citizens as well as the nuclear issue. The EU troika delivered a demarche in Tehran on July 23 regarding the detention of European citizens (French and British). The Europeans are awaiting a reaction from Iran. According to Sequensova, the EU will likely follow the lead of the French on this matter since the British embassy employees have been released and it is only the French citizen Clothilde Reiss who is still being held. The EU sentiment on Friday was to tighten its coordinated position and to perhaps summon Iranian Heads of Mission in European capitals for an explanation.

4. (SBU) The Czechs expect the discussion on Somalia to focus on EU High Representative Solana's May letter and for this to be a discussion of the main elements of the EU's long-term strategy in the region (such as how to strengthen the African Union). The EU Foreign Ministers also plan to discuss whether to name an EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa. According to Sequensova, the EU has not progressed to the stage of having a name in mind for the job.

Other Business - Moldova and Czech Visa Issue with Canada

15. (SBU) Now that Canada has reimposed visa requirements on the Czech Republic related to the substantial increase in asylum requests from Czech Roma this year, the Czechs have asked to add this issue to the GAERC agenda under "Any Other Business." Foreign Minister Kohout plans to press the other EU member states to stand in solidarity with the Czechs. Also under AOB, Polish FM Sikorski is scheduled to speak about his recent trip to Moldova.
Thompson-Jones